

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/601,504

Examiner

Steven D. Maki

Applicant(s)

RATLIFF ET AL.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 6-2-05.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-11 and 13-15.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 23 June 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

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Examiner's Amendment

1) An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Change title to:

--Pneumatic tire including steeply slanted grooves, rib having sipes and blocks having sipes--

Se MPEP 606.01.

Reasons for Allowance

2) The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance, which supplements applicant's remarks filed 6-2-05:

Japan 919 (JP 2002-103919) discloses a pneumatic tire having a tread comprising sipes, a rib and intermediate land columns 9a and 9b comprising second block land sections 8a and 8b and side land section columns 7a and 7b comprising first block land sections 6a d 6b. However, Japan 919 fails to teach "the steeply slanted grooves in each side region initiate at the junction of the central region and the side regions and terminate in the shoulders, forming circumferentially adjacent tread blocks, the blocks extending from the central region to the shoulders" (emphasis added). Japan 919 also fails to teach the blocks ".. having a plurality of sipes, the spacing between adjacent sipes increasing toward the tread shoulders, wherein the tread has a greater sipe density in the central region of the tire than in the side regions" (emphasis added).

The prior art of record including Japan 919, Europe 971 (EP 1075971), Japan 403 (JP 3-186403) and Fontaine (US 5343918) fails to disclose, teach or suggest a pneumatic tire comprising steeply slant grooves wherein "the steeply slanted grooves in each side region initiate at the junction of the central region and the side regions and terminate in the shoulders, forming circumferentially adjacent tread blocks, the blocks extending from the central region to the shoulders" (emphasis added) **in combination with** the circumferentially extending rib having "... a plurality of sipes extending across the full width of the rib, the sipes having a density of 2 to 8 sipes per inch (0.78 - 3.15 sipes per cm)" **and** the blocks "... having a plurality of sipes, the spacing between adjacent sipes increasing toward the tread shoulders, wherein the tread has a greater sipe density in the central region of the tire than in the side regions" (emphasis added) along with the remaining limitations of claim 1.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

3) Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Steven D. Maki whose telephone number is (571) 272-1221. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon. - Fri. 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

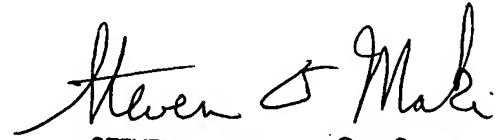
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Blaine Copenheaver can be reached on (571) 272-1156. The fax phone

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number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Steven D. Maki
August 13, 2005


STEVEN D. MAKI
PRIMARY EXAMINER
~~GROUP 1300~~
AU 1733
8-13-05